

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-00	L-00	CAC-00	M-00	NEA-00	NRC-00	NSAE-00
	NSCE-00	OES-00	OIC-00	NIMA-00	PA-00	GIWI-00	PRS-00
	P-00	CFPP-00	FMPC-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00
	TRSE-00	SCRS-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	SAS-00
	/000W						

-----C9D37F 140638Z /38

FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1125  
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
USLO TRIPOLI  
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L NDJAMENA 000384

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF, AF/C, AF/RSA, DRL; LONDON AND PARIS FOR  
AFRICAWATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/04/2014

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [CD](#)

SUBJECT: LIFTING TERM LIMITS: PUBLIC REFERENDUM SET FOR  
JUNE 6

REF: NDJAMENA 04 1980

Classified By: Political/Economic Officer Kathleen FitzGibbon for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: Chad's public referendum on constitutional amendments to remove presidential term limits is scheduled for June 6. Voter registration for the referendum has been completed, but was plagued by numerous technical and logistics problems. The call by some opposition groups for a boycott of the registration went unheeded. The Government is now compiling and verifying the electoral list which will then be open for public scrutiny. The Government of Chad has requested donor assistance for the referendum and 2006 election process. It is too early to tell if the Government will be able to keep its timetable. End Summary.

-----  
VOTER REGISTRATION COMPLETED  
-----

2. (C) The Government of Chad announced that the public referendum on the proposed constitutional amendments will be held on June 6. The registration process, which kicked off on January 10, had to be extended to February 16 because of the lack of registration materials and other technical shortcomings. Various officials of the National Commission for Electoral Registration (CENRE) told emboffs that they had "underestimated" the number of Chadians to be registered. The Government had prepared 5,000,000 registration cards but ran out in many areas. (Note: Another issue is without an accurate census, the Government is unclear about what percentage of Chadians are of voting age. End Note.) Most of the registration was conducted door-to-door. Registration officials in eastern Chad, for example, used donkeys and bikes to reach local villages. In some places, there were designated locations to register, but these sites were often located at the offices of local government authorities. These sites were less than neutral and may have deterred many residents from registering.

3. (C) Opposition parties are already charging that the Government gave more voter registration cards to the nomads and this explains why many cities lacked cards. Local authorities in Moundou, Kourma, and Sahr are concerned because nomads were registered in their home areas but will be allowed to vote outside those areas. In addition, they will have four days of voting. The Deputy Governor of Moundou Masagar Mbairidoum Lucas and (now former) Governor of Sahr Danyo Ndokedi told Pol/Econ officer on March 2 that it will be impossible to keep track of whether or not nomads have voted at other locations. They suspect that there will be a number of irregularities in eastern Chad. According to Lucas, military officials insisted on the four days of nomadic voting. Many regional military officials own herds and will likely appear at polling places with the nomads to influence their vote, according to Lucas. Danyo told P/E officer that there were not enough voter registration cards in Sahr. The Minister of Territorial Administration Mahamat Zene Bada authorized CENRE to collect names for the registration in notebooks, which were bound together and sent to N'Djamena, according to Danyo. He admitted that there

will be no way of tracking the names of those registered. Lucas said that the Government has demonstrated in previous elections that there are many ways to cheat. He said that he hoped their would be international observers for the referendum.

- - - - -  
OPPOSITION TURMOIL  
- - - - -

14. (C) Opposition groups were divided over participation in the registration process and show no signs of a united front for the referendum. Ten key members of the Party for Freedom and Development (PLD) defected over the party's call to boycott the registration. They joined the ruling MPS on March 5. Other key leaders, such as Saleh Kebzabo, Abdelkadar Kamougue, and Ngarlejj Yorongar, argued that all Chadians should be registered because in the event of the death or incapacitation of the President, elections would be arranged within 90 days and the standing electoral list would likely be used. Along with PLD's Ibni Oumar Saleh, former President Lol Mahamat Choua and Jean Alingue called for a boycott. Key opposition leaders are still divided over whether to boycott the referendum or to run a campaign for a "no" vote. The umbrella group, Coordination of Political

Parties for the Defense of the Constitution (CPDC), is already calling for a boycott. However, after its position on the registration was undermined when key leaders broke ranks, it is not clear that CPDC will be able to develop a common position on the referendum that will be effective. Chadian authorities in several cities and human rights groups tell us that the political opposition boycott was not respected.

- - - - -  
NEXT STEPS  
- - - - -

15. (C) The electoral list is being compiled by hand and then computerized in N'Djamena and will be presented for public viewing for 45 days. Given the irregularities of the registration process itself, opposition and human rights groups have already told us that they plan to file protests and challenges to the list. Once the electoral lists become official, two weeks of political campaigning will commence. The referendum is scheduled for June 6, but it is not clear if the date will slip due to issues with the electoral list or technical delays in terms of delivering election materials. There had been rumors that the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) wanted to hold the long-awaited municipal elections on the same day.

16. (C) Key human rights groups, such as the Chadian League for Human Rights (LTDH), were critical of the opposition politicians' calls for the boycott. LTDH supported the registration process because they believe it is every Chadian should be registered to have the right to vote. Nonetheless, LTDH chairman Massalbaye Tenebaye told Ambassador Wall on March 7, that LTDH is opposed to the Constitutional revisions.

17. (C) The ruling MPS is expected to campaign on the theme: a vote for the referendum is a vote for peace, unity, and stability, according to Lucas. Since the beginning of the year, President Deby appears to be reaching out to a number of constituencies. His public appearances at the cathedral during the holidays and strong speech in favor of the controversial family code and on women's rights on International Women's Day are two occasions in which he has reached beyond his Zaghawa and Muslim bases. Lucas, who is an MPS member, said that if Deby chose not to run for a third term, it is possible the MPS opposition could rejoin the party. He believes opposition within the MPS will grow instead.

18. (C) Lucas also warned P/E officer during a March 1 visit that international observers are necessary for the elections because the likelihood of widespread fraud is likely. He suggested that it may already be stolen. He received reports that some individuals may have received 2 to 3 registration cards, which may explain why there were not enough cards available for everyone who wanted to register. Governor Danyo of Sahr told P/E officer on March 2 that there were not enough cards for voters, so CENRE and local government officials were instructed to write the names of voters in notebooks for transmission to N'Djamena.

- - - - -  
APPEAL FOR DONOR SUPPORT  
- - - - -

19. (U) On March 9, the Minister of Plan Mahamat Ali Hassan, Minister for Decentralization Oumar Boukar, and the President of the Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) called together the donors to request assistance for the upcoming

electoral processes, including the referendum and the municipal, legislative, and presidential elections. The price tag for the referendum, they told the diplomatic corps, is USD 3,921,569. To date, the Government has provided all the funds for the process. The bulk of the funds are being used to fund CENI's activities and the rest are being used for training of election officials, logistics, and materials needed for the referendum.

¶10. (C) After the Government's presentation, the French Ambassador Jean-Pierre Bercot, speaking in his capacity as head of the European Union delegation, noted that the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is the primary mechanism for many E.U. countries, including France, for electoral support in Chad. Bercot said that there already may be some funds at UNDP's disposal for the upcoming elections. However, he said that donors would need to have the calendar and the budget for the municipal, legislative, and

presidential elections. He also noted that France is still waiting for a response from the Government on issues concerning the 2001 elections. He wondered if changing the Constitution is part of the electoral process. He urged the Government to move forward on the municipal elections, which would represent a significant democratic milestone as local officials will be elected. He also raised the issue of whether or not election observers will be requested. According to Bercot, francophone countries can provide foreign observers.

¶11. (C) Ambassador Wall also emphasized the importance that the U.S. places on reinforcing democratic institutions in Chad. He agreed with the French Ambassador that it is critical to have the electoral timetable and budget and consultations among the donors, particularly with UNDP, before making any requests for assistance from Washington. UNDP stated that the United Nations Political Affairs Bureau will evaluate the situation and whether the criteria for free and fair elections are in place in order to determine UNDP's role and level of support. Bercot suggested that the UNDP meet with the CENI to develop an official request for assistance and that UNDP share that with the donors.

-- --  
COMMENT  
-- --

¶12. (C) We anticipate a number of issues will arise over the electoral list. However, we will not know the extent of the problems with the registration until the electoral list is opened for public scrutiny. We expect numerous challenges from opposition groups. Given the delays already experienced during the registration, it may be difficult for the Government to overcome challenges to the electoral lists and tremendous technical and logistical obstacles to holding the referendum as scheduled. Nonetheless, the Government is determined to conduct the referendum prior to the rainy season and will work hard to minimize any additional delays.

¶13. (U) Khartoum and Tripoli Minimize Considered.  
WALL

NNNN